

Kabbalah in America

Ancient Lore in the New World

Edited by

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To Distinguish Israel and the Nations: E Pluribus Unum and Isaac Hutner's Appropriation of Kabbalistic Anthropology

Elliot R. Wolfson

Abstract

A vexing issue in kabbalistic lore is the privileging of the Jew as the somatic and pneumatic embodiment of divinity in the world. Examining this anthropological question in the worldview of Isaac Hutner (1906–1980) is especially important given the political context of his teaching in America. Can we find evidence in his discourses for a less ethnocentric attitude that is genuinely hospitable toward the non-Jew in his or her otherness? The apologetic justification that the deleterious attitude of kabbalists was cultivated in environments hostile to Jews whose rhetoric of dissonance can therefore be excused as reactionary self-defense is dispelled by the example of Hutner and his social setting. Translating the older kabbalistic gnosis, Hutner unfailingly taught that the messianic calling of the Jew sponsors the dialetheic truth that Jew and non-Jew are identical in virtue of being nonidentical.

Centre of equal daughters, equal sons,
All, all alike endear'd, grown, ungrown, young or old,
Strong, ample, fair, enduring, capable, rich,
Perennial with the Earth, with Freedom, Law and Love,
A grand, sane, towering, seated Mother,
Chair'd in the adamant of Time.

WALT WHITMAN, "America"



One of the more vexing issues in kabbalistic lore is the privileging of the Jew as the somatic and pneumatic embodiment of divinity in the world. Examining this anthropological question in the worldview of Isaac Hutner (1906–1980) is

especially important given the political context of his teaching in America.¹ Can we find evidence in his discourses for a less ethnocentric attitude, a philosophy that is genuinely hospitable toward and affirmative of the non-Jew in his or her otherness? The apologetic justification that the deleterious attitude of kabbalists was cultivated in environments hostile to Jews and therefore their rhetoric of dissonance can be excused as reactionary self-defense is dispelled by the example of Hutner and the social setting in which he delivered his discourses. Of course, I do not suggest that the American milieu has been unreservedly free of prejudice toward and oftentimes hatred of the Jews. My point is rather that even in the comparatively open society of America, which has constitutionally granted freedom of worship and provided socio-economic opportunities to Jews in an historically unprecedented way, Hutner frequently preached the distinctiveness of the Jewish people, and often in prejudicial language based on kabbalistic precedent. Beyond the contribution of charting Hutner's use of this kabbalistic trope, this chapter will question the presupposition, too often accepted by scholars without critical scrutiny, that the historical setting is determinative of one's ideational stance. Hutner presents a striking exception to this rule, alas, an exception that disproves rather than proves the rule.

Let me commence with the attempt of Steven Schwarzschild to demonstrate Hutner's espousal of a universalistic anthropology.² A "valuable by-product" of studying Hutner's thought, according to Schwarzschild, is

the demonstration that the idea of Orthodoxy as an insulated parochialism is far from the truth: it faces, sometimes to accept and at other times to reject, most commonly to accept, to reject, and to adapt in different mixtures, just the same intellectual, scientific, ethical, political, and even religious forces that the rest of the world tries to cope with—to be sure, from its own perspective—as everybody does. Furthermore, to call it fundamentalism ... is foolish, first, because a Christian-Protestant category is being used, and, more important, because 'orthodox Judaism' is first and foremost rabbinic-talmudic and the Talmud handles the Bible in the most extraordinarily unfundamentalist, unliteralist fashion.³

1 This chapter is an expansion and revision of the last section of Elliot R. Wolfson, "Discerning Difference through Comparison of the Same: Isaac Hutner's Transmission of Esoteric Wisdom," *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 45 (2019): 34–48.

2 Steven Schwarzschild, "Isaac Hutner," in *Interpreters of Judaism in the Late Twentieth Century*, edited by Steven T. Katz (Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1993), pp. 155–156.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 151–152.

It is beyond the parameters of this chapter to evaluate the claim about the nature of American Jewish Orthodoxy in the second half of the twentieth century. My interest is to examine Schwarzschild's conjecture as it applies more narrowly to Hutner's view of the comportment of the human being.

In the text upon which Schwarzschild bases his argument, Hutner states that the foundation of the whole edifice is the rabbinic maxim "Adam was created individually" (*adam nivra yehidi*).⁴ Two contradictory opinions emerge from this dictum: first, all human beings are the progeny of one father, and hence we are all the same according to the most rudimentary physiology; second, every person is distinct, which would imply that we are radically different from one another, even from parents, siblings, and other relatives; the former bespeaks the unity of humanity (*iḥud adam*) and the latter the singularity of each human (*yihud adam*).⁵ I cannot enter into all the details of Hutner's resolution of the apparent conflict between these two positions, but it will be necessary to delve a bit more deeply into the intricacies of his discourse in order to interrogate the accuracy of Schwarzschild's assumption that the subject is the whole of humanity without any ethnic qualification.

On the one hand, the ideal of the singularity of the human (*yehidut adam*), which is manifest most prominently in the face,⁶ confirms the tannaitic teaching⁷ that every person should say "for my sake the world was created."⁸ On the other hand, the apex of the ideal of the unity of humanity (*aḥdut adam*) is the command "Love your neighbor as yourself," *we-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha* (Leviticus 19:18),⁹ the scriptural grounding of the precept that love of the other is commensurate to love of oneself (*ahavat ha-zulat be-hashwa'ah aḥat im ahavat ašmo*).¹⁰ The ostensible conflict between the singularity of each human and the unity of all humanity—two perspectives rooted in the narrative of Adam having been created as a single being—is resolved by the equivalence of love of the other and love of oneself; that is, incorporation of the unity is

4 Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4:5. The order of the words in the source, *nivra adam yehidi*, is slightly different from Hutner's rendition.

5 Isaac Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Shavu'ot* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2008), 21:2–3, p. 132.

6 The location of the singularity of the self in the face, and the claim that the love of self is realized through the love of the other, brings to mind the ethical philosophy of Levinas and his doctrine of *le visage*. For a comparison of Hutner and Levinas, see Steven S. Schwarzschild, "An Introduction to the Thought of R. Isaac Hutner," *Modern Judaism* 5 (1985): 245–251.

7 Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4:5.

8 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Shavu'ot*, 21:4, p. 133.

9 Ibid., 21:8, pp. 134–135.

10 Ibid., 21:8, p. 135.

dependent on instantiation of the singularity. To be the same, we must be different. Death, which arose as a consequence of the primal sin of Adam and Eve and which involves the removal of consciousness (*hessaḥ ha-da'at*),¹¹ conceals all of these elements. Firstly, finitude problematizes the ability for one to say “for my sake the world was created,” since the world endures after the individual perishes. Secondly, insofar as the individual cannot proclaim that the world was created for his or her own sake, the mandate to love the other as oneself is compromised; the love of the other as oneself is dependent on a self to be loved, and if there is no self to be loved, then the other also cannot be loved. Thirdly, to the extent that the unity of humanity is dependent on the singularity of each human, if the latter is threatened, so too is the former.¹²

Hutner locates the rectification of this threefold concealment in the messianic promise “And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord with one name” (Zechariah 14:9). His interpretation is based on the following talmudic discussion of the verse:

Is he then not one now? R. Aḥa ben Ḥanina said: The world to come is not like this world. In this world, for good tidings one says ‘Blessed be the one who is good and who does good’ [*barukh ha-ṭov we-ha-meṭiv*], and for bad tidings one says ‘Blessed be the true judge’ [*barukh dayyan ha-emet*]; in the world to come, it will be entirely ‘the one who is good and who does good.’¹³

In the endtime—labeled rabbinically as *yom she-kullo ṭov*, the day that is completely good¹⁴—there will be only the blessing of divine goodness, because with the removal of death from the world even bad tidings will not herald misfortune. Hutner’s view is in accord with the rabbinic idea that the messianic

11 Isaac Hutner, *Ma'amerei Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Pesah* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2012), 52:14, p. 189.

12 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Shavu'ot*, 21:8, p. 135. On belief in resurrection as the removal of death from the world, which facilitates the ability of the individual to utter the statement “the world was created for my sake,” see Daniel Herskowitz and Alon Shalev, “Being-towards-Eternity: R. Isaac Hutner’s Adaptation of a Heideggerian Notion,” *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 26 (2018): 269 and 272.

13 Babylonian Talmud, *Pesaḥim* 50a.

14 Palestinian Talmud, *Ḥagigah* 21:1, 77b; Babylonian Talmud, *Qiddushin* 39b; *Hullin* 142a. See Elliot R. Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 229 n. 172; idem, “Phallic Jewissance and the Pleasure of No Pleasure,” in *Talmudic Transgressions: Engaging the Work of Daniel Boyarin*, edited by Charlotte Fonrobert, Ishay Rosen Zvi, Aharon Shemesh, and Moulie Vidas (Leiden: Brill, 2017), p. 312.

future is beyond the polarity of merit (*zekhut*) and demerit (*ḥovah*),¹⁵ which is to say, there is no more opposition of the side of evil;¹⁶ hence the blessing for goodness can be uttered even for seemingly injurious and distressing events.¹⁷ This coincides with Hutner's interpretation of the messianic ideal of the new Torah. In contrast to the Torah in its present configuration, which is dependent on human freedom to distinguish between good and evil and is thus woven from the rule of the power of choice, the new Torah changes into the "circumcision of the foreskin of the heart and the removal of choice." The Torah that will have sovereignty in the future, which is a return of the primordial Torah, is a law that is no longer predicated on the possibility of misconduct, since good will naturally become inexorable.¹⁸

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- 15 *Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah*, edited by Mordecai Margulies (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), 18:1, p. 391. It is of interest to note a correspondence between Hutner's description of the messianic era as a suspension of the axiology of innocence and guilt and his account of the redemption from Egypt, which occurred by means of the leap (*dillug*), a gesture that he explains as the overlooking of the merits of the Israelites. The departure from Egypt was warranted on account of the merits of the fathers. See Hutner, *Ma'amerei Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Pesah*, 70:2, p. 239. It would be interesting to compare Hutner's understanding of the leap and the Ḥabad interpretation. Regarding the latter, see Elliot R. Wolfson, "Achronic Time, Messianic Expectation, and the Secret of the Leap in Habad," in *Habad Hasidism: History, Thought, Image*, edited by Jonathan Meir and Gadi Sagiv (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2016), pp. 54–86 (English section).
- 16 Isaac Hutner, *Ma'amerei Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Sukkot* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2011), 114:5, p. 282.
- 17 The collapse of the binary opposition of judgement and lovingkindness can be expressed as discerning that the former is the depth of the latter. See Tsippi Abrahamov, "Correction or Creation? The Idea of Repentance in the Thought of Rabbi Isaac Hutner," *Da'at* 44 (2000): 104–105 (Hebrew). Compare Isaac Hutner, *Quntres Birkat Avot*, in *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Shabbat we-Sukkot* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2009), 20:4, p. 231. In that context, Hutner transmits the view of the sages of the truth (*ḥakhmei ha-emet*) that lovingkindness is the father and judgment the offspring, or relatedly, that judgment is the seal (*hotam*) of lovingkindness.
- 18 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Shavu'ot*, 43:4, pp. 220–221. Hutner avoids the stigma of antinomianism by not speaking about the nullification of the commandments in the new Torah. However, he does speak of a change from a Torah based on choice, and hence the ability to distinguish between good and evil, to a Torah based on the circumcision of the heart and the lack of choice, since there is only good without the correlate of evil. The continuity between the present Torah and the new Torah is also safeguarded by Hutner's comparing the new Torah to a parable (*mashal*), or more specifically the primordial parable (*meshal ha-qadmoni*), and the present Torah to the signified (*nimshal*). Just as the *mashal* and the *nimshal* are two components of one body, so the present Torah and the future Torah are in a reciprocal and mutually dependent relationship. On the paradoxical principle that the abolition of the Torah is its fulfilment and that breaking the tablets was for the sake of establishing the Torah, see Isaac Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Hanukkah* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2012), 3:3, pp. 38–39.

With the termination of evil as an autonomous force, there is no need for the blessing of divine judgment, and in this sense the divine name becomes complete.¹⁹ Hutner submits that the unity achieved with respect to the blessing “who is good and who does good” (*yeḥidut ha-ṭov ve-ha-meṭiv*) and the singularity of the human (*yeḥidut adam*) are two sides of the one coin that is the appearance of death in the world. Since, as we noted above, the concealment of the singularity of the human results in the concealment of the requirement “as yourself” in the directive to love the other, when the blessing “who is good and who does good” is fully revealed, the singularity of the human and the love of the other will be fully remedied.²⁰ The Tetragrammaton will be unified when the blessing assumes the form of “one who is entirely good and who does good” (*kullo ha-ṭov ve-ha-meṭiv*); and this occurs only in the end of days when darkness is subsumed in the light and the perfection of the disclosure of the unity of humanity will be revealed wholly on “that day.”²¹

At this juncture, Hutner turns explicitly to the destiny of the Jewish people as the one nation that can escape from the stranglehold of death, even before the end of days.²² He bases this belief on the rabbinic tradition to read the first word in the expression *ḥarut al ha-luḥot*, “incised upon the tablets” (Exodus 32:16) as *herut*, i.e., “freedom,” and more specifically as freedom from the angel of death.²³ Etched into the tablets, therefore, is the antidote to the scourge of human mortality, for just as engraved letters (*otiyot ḥaḳiqah*)—as

19 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Shavu'ot*, 21:9, pp. 135–136.

20 *Ibid.*, 21:10, p. 136.

21 *Ibid.*, 21:11, pp. 136–137.

22 The covenant of the 613 commandments of the Torah is linked to the covenant of the resurrection of the dead, which is to say, through observance of the commandments Jews are empowered to bring about a new reality of life without death. See Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Ḥanukkah*, 9:4, p. 83. On the identification of belief in the resurrection of the dead as the essential point of the stature of the community of Israel (*iqqar ha-nequddah be-ma'alat kenesset yisra'el*), see Hutner, *Ma'amerei Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Pesah*, 52:5, p. 185. The centrality of the belief in resurrection in Hutner's thought as an adoption and adaptation of Heidegger's being-toward-death in a traditional Jewish framework is explored in Herskowitz and Shalev, “Being-towards-Eternity.” Their thesis is summarized on p. 269: “As long as Heidegger's account of authenticity is founded solely upon the finitude and contingency of human existence, it cannot foster true meaning and therefore cannot yield actual authenticity. For Hutner, therefore, it is not death, but the overcoming of death—‘the light of resurrection’—that is the key to authenticity. Being-towards-death cannot generate a life of meaning; only a projection of existential eternity permits the possibility of authenticity that can undergird a vital and constructive life. The infinitude of life implied by resurrection testifies to the meaning of existence, for it is couched in an eternity that yields absoluteness.”

23 *Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah*, 18:3, p. 407; *Midrash Shemot Rabbah*, in *Midrash Rabbah im Kol ha-Mefarshim*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Vagshal, 2001), 32:1, p. 366, 41:7, p. 429, 51:8, p. 503;

opposed to written letters (*otiyot ketivah*)—cannot be separated or erased from the stone upon which they are engraved, so the soul of the Jew cannot be separated from the body upon which it is imprinted. This dispensation is granted especially to the Jews on account of the principle “Israel and the Torah are one,”²⁴ an abbreviation of the zoharic identification of God, Torah, and Israel.²⁵ Relating to this part of the discourse, Schwarzschild observes that, according to Hutner, the value of each human being is realized in the resurrection, but Israel constitutes “a historical anticipation of the eschatological kingdom, inasmuch as what one might call ‘resurrectability,’ that is, the fundamental inseparability of body and soul, has been built into it through the divine Torah.”²⁶ Schwarzschild is led, no doubt, by his assumption that Hutner affirmed the “typical unity of Jewish particularism and human universalism: on one hand, Israel is, indeed, the special and sui generis patrimony of God, and, on the other hand, the Jew is at least the potential actualization of the full humanity of all men, who will in the consummation of history share Israel’s faith and fate.”²⁷ What is obscured in Schwarzschild’s remark that the unique prestige accorded Israel sheds light on the nature of humanity more generally is that the uniqueness is never dissipated, not even in the messianic future, and hence non-Jews never attain the rank of the chosen people. I see no evidence that Hutner, as countless of Jewish sages before him, is not beholden to the view that Israel’s election is an inclusive exclusiveness that is an exclusive inclusiveness: the Jew includes the other as the other the Jew excludes.²⁸ The ethnocentrism of Israel’s elective status is crucial to understanding the true intent of Hutner’s remarks concerning *yehidut adam* and *aḥdut adam*—Israel is the particularity indexical of the generality that resists generalization of the abstract dissociated from the particularization of the concrete.²⁹ Thus, near the conclusion of the discourse, Hutner writes, “From the perspective of the

Midrash Rabbah: Shir ha-Shirim, edited by Shimshon Dunasky (Jerusalem: Dvir, 1980), 8:3, p. 169; *Midrash Tanḥuma* (Jerusalem: Eshkol, 1972), Ki Tissa, 16, p. 411, Ekev, 8, p. 868.

24 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Shavu’ot*, 21:12, p. 137. Compare Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Pesah*, 75:9, p. 262.

25 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Shavu’ot*, 4:7, p. 52. Compare *Zohar* 3:73a.

26 Schwarzschild, “Isaac Hutner,” p. 156.

27 Ibid.

28 Elliot R. Wolfson, *Heidegger and Kabbalah: Hidden Gnosis and the Path of Poiësis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019), p. 347.

29 Compare Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Pesah*, 64:7, pp. 311–312. The restfulness of Sabbath is said to have been created with knowledge (*da’at*) and the creation of Adam similarly is linked to the faculty of knowledge. Sabbath, therefore, is what brings the power of knowledge in the human to fruition. Since the Sabbath is an obligation for the Jews alone, it follows that the reference to Adam should also be interpreted in this limited and ethnocentric way.

faith in the heart, we discern the unity of Israel in the gradation of ‘as yourself’ [*kamokha*].”³⁰ Here the secret is finally unmasked—to love yourself as your neighbor is addressed to the Israelite in relation to other members of the community of Israel.³¹ Once we understand that the biblical decree to love one’s neighbor applies to the Israelites and not to all nations, we are compelled to admit as well that Hutner’s taxonomies of the particular singularity of each human and the collective unity of humankind—the exemplar of the human at the beginning before the rupture and the exemplar to be achieved at the end after the restoration—refer primarily to the Jews.

Following a longstanding emphasis in kabbalistic sources, Hutner singles out the Jewish people as the most emblematic representation of humanity, a characterization that implied, at times, that the Jews are an ethnos that is embrative of the other only insofar as it is dismissive of the other—even the seven Noahide laws, the rabbinic category to denote the universal laws binding on all of human society, are, in truth, a mode of including the excluded in such a way that the inclusion fortifies the exclusion; that is, the non-Jew is obligated by nature in the minimum of seven laws as compared to the maximum of the six hundred and thirteen commandments by which the Jew is ideally duty-bound through an act of volitional acceptance signified by the motto *na’aseh we-nishma*, “we will do and we will heed” (Exodus 24:7).³² The secret with regard to this doctrine may be that what is apparently universalistic in

30 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Shavu’ot*, 21:13, p. 138.

31 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah* (Jerusalem: Yeshivat Or wi-Yeshu’ah, 2009), Hilkhot De’ot, 6:3, p. 138. For an analysis of the meaning of the neighbor in this commandment, see Ernst Simon, “The Neighbor (*Re’a*) Whom We Shall Love,” in *Modern Jewish Ethics: Theory and Practice*, edited by Marvin Fox (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975), pp. 29–56, and Harold Fisch, “A Response to Ernst Simon,” pp. 57–61. See also Adam Zachary Newton, *The Fence and the Neighbor: Emmanuel Levinas, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, and Israel Among the Nations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 59–84.

32 Isaac Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Ro’sh ha-Shanah* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2010), 31:10, pp. 200–201; idem, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Pesah*, 62:4, p. 200; idem, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Hanukkah*, 9:4, pp. 83–86. For the relation of the seven Noahide laws and the presumed six laws that were given to Adam, see Isaac Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Iggerot u-Khetavim* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2012), #28, pp. 48–49. The question of whether the descendants of Noah (*benei noah*) are warned about polytheism (*shittuf*) is discussed by Hutner, *Hiddushei Halakhot*, in *Sefer ha-Zikkaron le-Maran Ba’al ha-Paḥad Yiṣḥaq*, edited by Josef Buxboim (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2008), 58, pp. 269–272. Compare the discussion of the seven Noahide laws in Elliot R. Wolfson, *Open Secret: Postmessianic Messianism and the Mystical Revision of Menahem Mendel Schneerson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 229–231. On the novelty that was brought to the world through Israel’s response *na’aseh we-nishma*, see Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Shavu’ot*, 4:7 p. 52.

fact amplifies the particularism.³³ A midrashic passage states that when Israel and the nations of the world came before God on Rosh ha-Shanah and protested that they did not know who would come out victorious, the response was that when Israel comes before God with the palm branches and citron fruit on Sukkot, it becomes clear that they were victorious.³⁴ Commenting on this passage, Hutner emphasizes the connection between the two holidays and notes that Sukkot illumines the true meaning of Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur: “the content of the holiness of the holiday of Sukkot, related to the Days of Awe, is the matter of the purification of the differentiation between Israel and the nations [*berur havdalat yisra’el bein ha-ammim*].”³⁵ One cannot but be struck by the depth of the ethnocentrism that emerges from viewing the purpose of the holiest days of the year—the days permeated with the burden to repent—as the fortification of the divide that separates Jews and non-Jews.³⁶

In another context, Hutner is emphatic about the need to distinguish the metaphysical status of the Jews and the physical status of the non-Jews, even if it appears that the chasm between the two has been surmounted:

For the sage in the wisdom of Torah is from Israel, and the sage in the wisdom of nature is from the nations of the world. The existence of the wisdom of Torah in one of the nations of the world does not enter at all into the calculation [*einah nikhneset be-ḥeshbon kelal*], and it is clear that this reality does not dictate anything. For in the verse it is written

33 See Steven Schwarzschild, “An Introduction to the Thought of R. Isaac Hutner,” *Modern Judaism* 5 (1985): 272, n. 140: “R. Hutner’s universalistic Noachitism, which, however, accrues to the advantage of Moslems and disadvantage of Christians ... and is again suffused with esotericism.” The text that is the basis of Schwarzschild’s comments is Hutner’s discussion of the matter of polytheism and not the seven Noahides laws, and the removal of Muslims from the category of idolatry, which applies to Christians, is derived by Hutner from Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Ma’akhalot Asurot*, 11:7, p. 450. See Hutner, *Ḥiddushei Halakhot*, 58, p. 271. In my judgment, Schwarzschild’s insight can be applied to the matter of the seven Noahide laws, although there is no justification for the assertion that Hutner’s account of the Noahide laws advantages Islam.

34 *Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah*, 30:2, pp. 694–695.

35 Hutner, *Pahad Yiṣṣaq: Ro’sh ha-Shanah*, 10:1, p. 82.

36 *Ibid.*, 10:11, p. 88, where Hutner states that the splitting of the red sea was the completion of the exodus from Egypt, and the purpose of the latter was the separation of Israel from the nations. He goes on to say that just as there was this separation in the world before the transgression, so there is this separation in the world of repentance after the transgression. The former is correlated with the exodus from Egypt and the latter with Yom Kippur.

“[Moses charged us with the Torah], as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob” (Deuteronomy 33:4).³⁷

The roots for this anthropology in rabbinic literature are well known. The teaching that has exerted the greatest influence is the interpretation of Ezekiel 34:31, “For you, my flock, that I tend are men,” *we-atten š’oni š’on mar’iti adam attem*, as “You are called human, but the idolaters are not called human,” whence the rabbis deduced that Israel are called *adam* but not the idolatrous nations.³⁸ Elsewhere I have documented in great textual detail the xenophobia spawned by this rabbinic exegesis in medieval Kabbalah and its lingering impact through the centuries to the present.³⁹ Hutner regularly reiterated the aforementioned exegesis of Ezekiel 34:31 that constricts the use of *adam* to Israel.

In one context, he taught that after the primal sin in the Garden of Eden, only Jews have the capacity to restore the form to its original status because they alone bear the divine image and are thus marked singularly as the children of God (Deuteronomy 14:1).⁴⁰ This is the import of the rabbinic dictum “Beloved are Israel for they are called children of God”⁴¹—the status of being the children of God imparts to the Jewish people the obligation to compare the

37 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Ḥanukkah*, 9:2, pp. 81–82. Hutner does not identify the one nation from the nations of the world that can claim proprietorship of the wisdom of Torah, but it stands to reason that the reference is to Edom or Christianity, since the New Testament is built upon the foundation of the Old Testament. Another striking example of the intractable distinction between Jew and non-Jew is Hutner’s assertion that the analogical capacity of *ke-illu*—the hermeneutical construct *as if* that allows for the comparison of disparate entities and the consequent traversing of boundaries—is unique to the Jew and lacking in the non-Jew. See Hutner, *Ma’amerei Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Sukkot*, 76:9–10, pp. 198–199. On the transformative power of the *ke-illu*, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 145–146; idem, “Iconic Visualization and the Imaginal Body of God: The Role of Intention in the Rabbinic Conception of Prayer,” *Modern Theology* 12 (1996): 141–143, and references to other scholars cited on p. 157 n. 37; idem, *Alef*, pp. 70 and 214 n. 90.

38 For references, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond—Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 42 n. 107, 43–44, 46, 52 n. 151, 53, 63, 89, 112, 160.

39 Of the many examples that could be cited, I will mention one recent example: Moshe Shapira, *Shi’urei Savei de-Vei Atuna*, edited by Uri Shraga Jungreis (Jerusalem, 2019). The teachings compiled in this collection are replete with derogatory portrayals of non-Jews and pronouncements of the spiritual superiority of the Jews.

40 Hutner, *Ma’amerei Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Pesah*, 24:9, p. 101.

41 Mishnah, Avot 3:14.

form to its creator (*dimmuy ha-šurah le-yošrah*).⁴² In another passage, Hutner cites an astounding tradition that Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto brought in the name of the ancient ones (*qadmonim*),⁴³ to the effect that the very existence of the other nations is a result of the blemish of Adam; that is to say, if not for the primeval disobedience, the community of Israel would have been the sole ethnicity in the world. Inasmuch as the Jews are the only people to be called *adam* in an unambiguous way, the ontological status of the other nations is that of hybridity (*ta'arovet*). The exteriority of the idolatrous nations has the similitude of being human but their interiority does not merit this designation.⁴⁴

Hutner is not unaware of the philosophical consequences of positing such a sharp dichotomy. Indeed, as many kabbalists before him, he struggled with affirming the supposedly unbridgeable discrepancy between Jew and Gentile in light of the assumption that the underlying oneness of the divine would problematize the declaration of such a duality. Considering the matter from the vantagepoint of the *Ein Sof*—a vantagepoint that is phenomenologically the obliteration of all vantagepoints—the otherness of the other must be included in the essence of the infinite concerning which it is said that there is nothing outside of it. That is, if we presume, as we must, that there is no deficiency in the perfection of *Ein Sof*, it follows that the perfection must contain its own imperfection. The limitless comprises the potential for limit in its limitlessness, and conversely, the potencies that emanate from *Ein Sof* will assume the paradoxical nature, in the language of Azriel of Gerona, of the limited force that is unlimited (*koah bi-gevul mi-beli gevul*).⁴⁵ On the social plane, we must likewise say that the otherness of the Jew of necessity comprises its own other—the self-identity of the same is different in virtue of being the same and the same in virtue of being different.⁴⁶ I subscribe to the incisive observation of Schwarzschild, “R. Hutner’s dialectical theory of the interconnectedness of similarity and difference, even opposition, arises from total identity. Thus Christianity, sprung from the identical source as Judaism, is the latter’s most extreme opponent.”⁴⁷ After all, as Schwarzschild duly noted, the scriptural pro-

42 Hutner, *Paḥad Yišḥaq: Shavu'ot*, 7:3, p. 59.

43 The tradition is mentioned by Ḥayyim Viṭal, *Sefer ha-Liqquṭim* (Jerusalem: Sitrei Ḥayyim, 2015), p. 476. Compare idem, *Sha'ar ha-Pesuqim*, edited by Meir Yohanan Elkoubi (Jerusalem: Sha'arei Yišḥaq, 2017), pp. 19–20.

44 Hutner, *Ma'amerei Paḥad Yišḥaq: Pesah*, 74:4, p. 263.

45 For a more detailed discussion with citation of relevant texts, see Wolfson, *Heidegger and Kabbalah*, pp. 114, 160, 210–211.

46 Hutner, *Ma'amerei Paḥad Yišḥaq: Sukkot*, 23:9, p. 55, applies the same logic to the creation of Adam; that is, insofar as Adam is said to contain all things, he must include in himself even the lower forms of existence.

47 Schwarzschild, “Isaac Hutner,” p. 157.

totypes for Christianity and Judaism are the twin brothers Esau and Jacob.⁴⁸ Minimally, this image suggests that difference of identity proceeds from an identity of difference.

Commenting on God's response to Rebekah, "Two nations are in your womb, two separate nations shall issue from your body" (Genesis 25:23), Hutner remarks that on the surface, Jacob and Esau are similar to one another (*domim zeh la-zeh*), since they are twins gestated in one womb; beneath the surface, however, they are fundamentally opposed to each other (*muvdalim zeh mi-zeh behelet*). Notwithstanding Hutner's insistence on the absolute and incontrovertible dissimilarity between the presumably similar entities, we return conceptually to the paradox previously noted: difference must be in the root of what appears to be indifferent. From this Hutner infers the principle that "the existence of the work of comparison is for the sake of accentuating the depth of the difference [*mešit'utah shel avodat ha-hashwa'ah le-shem havla'at omeq ha-havdalah*]." To illustrate the point Hutner offers the example of the Yom Kippur ritual of the two identical he-goats upon which are cast lots, resulting in one marked for the Lord and the other marked for Azazel; the former is sacrificed as a sin offering and the latter is cast off into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:7–10). The isomorphism between the two he-goats leads Hutner to conclude, "Precisely here in the place of absolute, profound difference [*hehlet havdalah tehomi*], there is the condition of complete indifference [*shivyon gamur*]."⁴⁹

The converging divergence in the diverging convergence is exemplified as well in the teaching attributed to Rava that on Purim one must become so inebriated that one no longer knows the difference between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordecai (*ad de-lo yada bein arur haman le-varukh mordekhai*).⁵⁰ The superficially frivolous instruction to drink enough wine so that one cannot discriminate Mordecai and Haman, the Jew and his nemesis the Amalekite, is the means to bring one to the unfathomable mystery of obfuscating the boundaries of antinomies whose boundaries cannot be obfuscated, a wisdom analogous to the two he-goats on Yom Kippur: effectively the same on the outside but exceedingly different on the inside. Indeed, the closer the opposites

48 Many scholars have written on the typological distinctions between Esau and Jacob, Edom and Israel, Christianity and Judaism, the Church and the Synagogue. See the learned review in Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, translated by Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 1–30.

49 Isaac Hutner, *Paḥad Yišḥaq: Purim* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 1989), 35:3, p. 88.

50 Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 7b.

are outwardly, the better we grasp the disparity inwardly.⁵¹ Just as Jacob struggled with Samael, the archon of Esau,⁵² so the Jewish people must do battle constantly with the nations of the world, who seek to destroy their holiness by arousing the spiritual forces of impurity.⁵³ Hence, the community of Israel stands vis-à-vis the nations of the world in the opposition of *zeh le'ummat zeh*, “the one corresponding to the other” (Ecclesiastes 7:14).⁵⁴ Based on this principle, the first commandments of the Decalogue, “I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, the house of bondage,” and “You shall have no other gods besides me” (Exodus 20:2–3), respectively ameliorate the general deceit of Esau/Edom, which is idolatry, and the general deceit of Ishmael, which is belief in false prophecy.⁵⁵

It should come as no surprise that Hutner felt the need to drive this point home in the American context. Even though his audience was men who were living within the institutional framework of ultra-Orthodoxy, securely secluded from the wider secular environment, Hutner still understood that the impulse for assimilation in America presented a great spiritual provocation. As he remarked in one of his discourses for Purim, a foundation that was taught repeatedly in his academy was the effort to discern difference between two matters that appeared in their exteriority to be the same, so that of necessity, the difference would be found to dwell in their interiority.⁵⁶ The ancient wisdom of the Kabbalah, that through overt sameness we can discern the depth of difference, served as a heuristic tool for the master to communicate to his students the secret of incorporation through segregation. Whatever messianic impulse Hutner harbored,⁵⁷ he never tired of emphasizing the ethnocentric privileging of Israel as culturally and linguistically unrivalled. The chauvinism is evident even when Hutner acknowledges that non-Jews will recognize the God of Israel in accord with the prophecy “For then I will make the nations pure of speech, so that they all invoke the Lord by name, and serve him with

51 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Purim*, 6:1–8, pp. 42–45.

52 This explanation is in accord with the midrashic interpretation of Genesis 32:25. Compare *Midrash Tanḥuma*, Wa-yishlah, 8, p. 137.

53 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Ḥanukkah*, 2:2, pp. 33–34. On the difference between Ishmael and Amaleq, symbolic of Islam and Christianity, see *ibid.*, 15:3, p. 138. See also Hutner, *Quntres Yerah ha-Eitanim*, in *Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Shabbat we-Sukkot*, 4:2, pp. 183–184; *idem*, *Ma'amerei Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Sukkot*, 122:7–8, pp. 303–304. Schwarzschild, “Isaac Hutner,” p. 157, remarks that “R. Hutner’s silence about all things Moslem is, however, eloquent.” But see p. 164 n. 5.

54 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Ḥanukkah*, 6:18, p. 58.

55 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Shavu'ot*, 33, p. 187.

56 Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣṣḥaq: Purim*, 6:2, pp. 42–43.

57 Schwarzschild, “Isaac Hutner,” pp. 157–158. See also Yaakov Elman, “*Paḥad Yitzhak: A Joyful Song of Affirmation*,” *Ḥakirah* 20 (2015): 13.

one accord” (Zephaniah 3:9). The eventual recognition of the monotheistic God of Judaism and the proper worship thereof on the part of non-Jews is supported by Rashi’s interpretive gloss on “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4):

Now the Lord is our God and not the gods of the nations; in the future, he will be the one Lord, as it says ‘For then I will make the nations pure of speech, so that they all invoke the Lord by name.’ And it says ‘in that day there shall be one Lord with one name’ (Zechariah 14:9).⁵⁸

The allegation here is far-reaching: not only is it the case that non-Jews will acknowledge the God of Israel, but the oneness of that God is dependent on that recognition.⁵⁹ Hutner is quick to add the stipulation that non-Jews did not come to this confession on their own initiative; they were assisted and coerced by the Jews.⁶⁰ The role of non-Jews paving the way for the messiah is limited to Esau and Ishmael, ciphers respectively for Christianity and Islam—the prioritizing of monotheism amongst the so-called Abrahamic religions⁶¹ results in an ethnocentrism within the ethnocentrism. This contention is supported by the uncensored version of a comment from Maimonides:

All of these things concerning Jesus the Nazirite and that Ishmaelite⁶² who arose after him are only to prepare the way for the messianic king and to repair the world entirely to worship the Lord together, as it says “For then I will make the nations pure of speech, so that they all invoke the Lord by name, and serve him with one accord.” How is this? The world is already entirely filled from the words of the messiah, from words of Torah, and from the matters of the commandments. And these things spread to the faraway islands and amongst many nations of

58 Isaac ben Solomon, *Perushei Rashi al ha-Torah*, edited and annotated by Ḥayyim Dov Chavel (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1983), p. 529.

59 Hutner, *Ma’amerei Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Sukkot*, 114:5, p. 262.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 262–263.

61 For a critical assessment of this category, see Aaron W. Hughes, *Abrahamic Religions: On the Uses and Abuses of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For a lucid presentation of the more conventional approach, see Jon D. Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

62 It is noteworthy that even though Hutner cites the uncensored text of Maimonides (see following note for reference), he censors the text by leaving out the explicit name of Jesus and the allusion to Muḥammad. I have restored these references in my translation.

uncircumcised hearts, and they deliberate in these matters and in the commandments of the Torah. These [the Christians] say that “these commandments were true, but they have already be annulled in this time, and they are not performed for generations,” and these [the Muslims] say “there are hidden matters [*devarim nistarot*] in them, and they are not in accord with their contextual sense, and the messiah will come and reveal their secrets.” When the messianic king will arise in truth, and he will be victorious, elevated, and exalted, they will all immediately return, and they will know that their forefathers inherited deceit, and that their prophets and forefathers were mistaken.⁶³

In this Maimonidean passage, Hutner finds corroboration for his assertion that the Jews played the active role in forcing the Christians and Muslims to assist in the messianic drama in history. However, the tone of his argument is much more negative in disparaging these liturgical communities. Thus, after attributing to Christians and Muslims the task of preparing the way for the messianic coming, Hutner adds that they are the “refuse” (*pesolet*) to whom these rectifications (*tiqqunim*) were assigned. Christians and Muslims are referred to as the ones who have fallen (*avekgefalene*) from the Jews by their falsifications and blunders with regard to the holy concepts. In the end, Hutner accepts that they are distinguished from other nations insofar as they are occupied with words about the creator; that is, their engagement with monotheism makes them theological partners with Jews. Furthermore, their eschatological pretenses were appropriated from Abraham and therefore they bear on their backs the path to the messiah. If the severe modification that Hutner imposes on the view of Maimonides was not enough, he insists that the messianic onus was imputed to Christians and Muslims after they were defeated and without their will or knowledge. Despite the fact that the word “messiah” has caused intense hatred toward the Jews by the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, they

63 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Melakhim u-Milhamot, 11:4, p. 1244. Maimonides's characterization of Muslims denying the exoteric sense in favor of an esoteric sense to be disclosed by the messiah is a matter that deserves a separate treatment. The view of Maimonides was anticipated by Judah Halevi, *The Book of Kuzari: The Book of Rejoinder and Proof of the Despised Religion*, translated by Michael Schwartz, with an introduction by Daniel J. Lasker (Ben-Gurion: University of Ben-Gurion in the Negev, 2017), 4:23, p. 245 (Hebrew). Christianity and Islam are “fraudulent imitators” of Judaism, but as imitators of the true religion, they helped pave the way for the coming of the messiah. See Daniel J. Lasker, “Proselyte, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the Thought of Judah Halevi,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* (1990): 85–87.

are the ones who must arrange the path so that God will be called by one name on that propitious day in the future.

Proper attunement to Hutner's words validates that he, too, steadfastly maintained that the universal is achieved through the agency of the particular; this does not mean, however, that the particular is ever abrogated in the universal. Consider his gloss in another passage on the aforementioned interpretation of Rashi on the *Shema*, "in the future all the powers of the nations of the world will empty into the treasure of the holiness of the community of Israel."⁶⁴ That the other nations will recognize the God of the Jewish faith as the one true divinity extols the virtue and benefit of the chosen people over the other nations. The emphasis on the augmentation of Israel's holiness underscores Hutner's impenitent and persistent conviction in the cultural-spiritual superiority of the Jews.

Translating the kabbalistic gnosis, Hutner unfailingly taught that the particularity of the universal preserves the universality of the particular. For Hutner, as for Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, the messianic calling of the Jew sponsors the dialethic truth⁶⁵ that Jew and non-Jew are identical in virtue of being nonidentical.⁶⁶ I have discussed the status of the non-Jew in Schneerson's teaching elsewhere⁶⁷ and here I will briefly summarize my conclusion that

64 Isaac Hutner, *Paḥad Yiṣḥaq: Yom ha-Kippurim* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 2013), 5:3, p. 72.

65 For an earlier application of this logic of contradiction, or what I prefer to call dialetheism, see Elliot R. Wolfson, "Deceitful Truth and Truthful Deceit: *Sod ha-Hippukh* and Abulafia's Divergence from Maimonides," in *A Tribute to Hannah: Jubilee Book in Honor of Hannah Kasher*, edited by Avraham Elqayam and Ariel Malachi (Tel-Aviv: Idra, 2018), pp. 91–125 (English section). For an extended discussion of dialetheism and the problem of truth and falsity, see Graham Priest, *In Contradiction: A Study of the Transconsistent*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 53–72.

66 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 250–252. See also idem, *Giving beyond the Gift: Apophasis and the Overcoming of Theomania* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), pp. 152–153; idem, *Heidegger and Kabbalah*, pp. 346–347.

67 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 224–264. For a more universalistic interpretation of Schneerson's attitude to non-Jews, see Philip Wexler, with Eli Rubin, and Michael Wexler, *Social Vision: The Lubavitcher Rebbe's Transformative Paradigm for the World* (New York: Herder & Herder, 2019), p. 26. Schneerson, we are told, "wanted non-Jews too to consciously participate in the cosmic union of worlds, souls, and divinity. He wanted the Hasidic ethos to become the new foundation for a sacralized global society, providing an entirely new paradigm for individual life and communal life, for social institutions and for political norms." It is beyond the confines of this note to assess this grandiose assertion comprehensively, but let me briefly note some difficulties with the textual evidence marshalled to support it. See *ibid.*, pp. 21–22. The text that serves as the basis for the conclusion that the sixth Rebbe, Yosef Yiṣḥaq Schneersohn, provided "a theorization of the universal realization of the Baal Shem Tov's vision through the unfolding of history" is Menaḥem Mendel

the possibility of messianic rectification, and the universal singularity implied thereby, is predicated on the paradoxical emplacement of the non-Jew in the light of the infinite essence, but in such a way as to safeguard the inequality

Schneerson, *Siḥot Qodesh 5740*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Vaad Hanochos Hatemimim, 1986), p. 804. Schneerson supposedly built on the fact that his father-in-law advanced the Beshtian directive to spread the wellsprings outward by translating the secrets of the Torah into seventy languages so that even non-Jews could understand them according to the literal sense. Two points are noteworthy. First, the text clearly enunciates that the seventy languages are related to Hebrew as the seventy nations are related to the Jewish people, and just as Hebrew is the only language that is holy, so the Jews are the only people that are holy. This fundamental discrepancy between Jews and non-Jews is not overcome; on the contrary, the bridge that draws them closer leaves them far apart. Second, the effort to translate the secrets into a comprehensible form is to afford the non-Jews the opportunity to know them in their *literal sense*, and not according to their interiority. What is expressed here is thus consistent with what Ḥabad historiography considers to be the innovation of their movement, beginning with Shneur Zalman of Liadi, to spread the inward meaning of Torah by garbing it in the garment of the three cerebral traits, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (*hitlabeshut ḥokhmah binah wa-da'at*). See Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5751*, vol. 3 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1993), p. 378. On the universalist understanding, see also Wexler, *Social Vision*, p. 85. The letter cited there from Schneerson to a representative of Poland's Council for Polish Jewish Relations does indeed interpret the rabbinic teaching that Adam was created as a single individual (see above, n. 4) universally, but I would take this *cum grānō salis*, since there are numerous passages in which Schneerson interprets the rabbinic text in a more particularistic register referring exclusively to the Jewish people. (The citation in Wexler, *Social Vision*, p. 135, from Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5744*, vol. 4 [Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990], p. 2160, is also problematic insofar as the gloss on the talmudic teaching that Adam was created individually refers "not only to Jews ... but to all the descendents of Adam, including non-Jews" appears in brackets in the original and it is not clear that this was the intent of Schneerson. The talk (*siḥah*) from 12 Tammuz 5744 (July 12, 1984) was not edited by Schneerson. Moreover, in the parenthetical remark, the chosenness of Israel on the part of God is emphasized, *attah vehartanu mi-kol ha-ammim*. For a more particularistic and ethnocentric application of the dictum to the creation of the Jew, see Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Liqqutei Siḥot*, vol. 5 [Brooklyn: Kehot, 2000], p. 293; idem, *Liqqutei Siḥot*, vol. 19 [Brooklyn: Kehot, 2000], p. 285; idem, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5742*, vol. 4 [Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990], p. 229; idem, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5745*, vol. 5 [Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990], pp. 2758–2759; idem, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5747*, vol. 1 [Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990], p. 28.) I regret to add that the reference to chapter thirty-two of the first part of the *Tanya* is a misreading. The context shows unambiguously that Shneur Zalman understood the biblical command to love one's neighbor as oneself as referring to one's fellow Jew and not to humankind at large. Finally, the explication of the passage from Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5751*, vol. 3, p. 342 cited by Wexler, *Social Vision*, p. 86, as applying to non-Jews is also questionable. Schneerson's focus is on Jews who are remote from the Torah and are thus designated as "creatures in the world" (*beriyot be-alma*), an expression that is usually used for the more general population.

with the Jew. The eschaton would thus reflect the primal state wherein the shell of the lights of the chaos (*orot de-tohu*) that preceded the lights of the rectification (*orot de-tiqqun*)—the former correlated with the plurivocality of the nations of the world and the latter with the univocity of Israel to whom the name *adam* is properly ascribed—are comprised in the essence of the emanator in the aspect of the “strength of the light of the supernal powers of the divine holiness” (*toqef ha-or di-gevurot ha-elyonot di-qedushshah ha-elohit*).⁶⁸ Schneerson stayed faithful to the teaching of the previous masters, going back to Shneur Zalman of Liadi, by insisting that even in the indiscriminate essence a discrimination can and must be made since the ontological root for

68 Dovber Schneerson, *Torat Hayyim: Bere'shit* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1993), 73c. The ethnocentrism is mitigated to some extent by the proposition that the term *adam* can be attributed to the nations of the world from the vantagepoint of the externality of the Tetragrammaton in contrast to the Jewish people to whom the term is applied from the vantagepoint of the interiority of the Tetragrammaton. Only the Jew, therefore, can be incorporated “in the aspect of the unity and the abnegation of existence from something to nothing” (*bi-vehinat ha-yihud we-ha-bitul bi-mesh'ut me-yesh le-ayin*). See *ibid.*, 74c and 76d. Alternatively expressed, the spiritual comportment of the Jew (*yehudi*) is linked to the aspect of Judah (*yehudah*), which in turn is related to the word *hoda'ah*, the act of confession that signifies the state of nullification (*bitul*) and assimilation (*hitkallelut*) into the light of infinity that transcends all the worlds, a state that is above comprehension. See Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2001), 45c; *idem*, *Liqutei Torah*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1996), Pequdei, 4c. In virtue of this sense of integration, the attribution of *adam* to Israel is connected to the expression *eddamme le-elyon*, “I will be compared to the most high” (Isaiah 14:14); that is, the Jew incarnates the human form most perfectly because the Jewish soul alone can be compared to the divine. The internal aspect of *YHWH* enables the conjunction of the Jewish soul to *Ein Sof*, the nothing that is the true something (*yesh amitti*) in the world of rectification (*olam ha-tiqqun*), whereas the animal soul of the non-Jew in the world of chaos (*olam ha-tohu*) is the external aspect of *YHWH* (the word *behemah* is decoded as *bah mem-he*, in it is forty-five, an allusion to the numerology of the name when spelled out as *yod he waw he*). See Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Liqutei Siḥot*, vol. 15 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2000), p. 19. The connectedness of the Jewish soul to the divine entailed in the locution *eddamme le-elyon* is above the connection that is achieved through Torah and the commandments. See Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwva'adut 5750*, vol. 3 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1991), pp. 125–126. Even though the nexus between *adam* and *eddamme le-elyon* implies that the analogy of human and divine is based on the imagination (*dimyon*), in the final analysis, this conveys that the Jew, who is the human in the most pristine sense, is one with the essence (*ašmut*) and substance (*mahut*) of the divine, and is thus, in the words of Shneur Zalman of Liadi (*Liqutei Amarim: Tanya* [Brooklyn: Kehot, 2010], pt. 1, ch. 2, 6a), “in actuality a portion of God from above” (*heleq eloha mi-ma 'al mammash*). See Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwva'adut 5750*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990), p. 282; *idem*, *Sefer ha-Siḥot 5750*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2010), p. 38; *idem*, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwva'adut 5752*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1993), p. 65. Needless to say, numerous other texts could have been mentioned to substantiate the point.

the soul of Israel is located uniquely and distinctively in the highest aspect of the essence, which corresponds to the pneumatic gradation of *yehidah*. The path of Ḥabad leads us notionally to posit that in the place of indifference, where opposites collide, a difference can still be made⁶⁹ insofar as the Jew alone possess the divine soul (*nefesh elohit*) in its true form (*ṣurah ha-amittit*), such that the body itself is a vessel for the light.⁷⁰ Schneerson's attempt to synchronize Maimonidean universalism and mystical individualism may be considered typical of the hybridity that shaped his orientation in the course of his lifetime. The coalescence of these disparate intellectual currents produced a curious, and not altogether coherent, apocalyptic disbanding of the dyadic clash between Jew and non-Jew, but in such a way that the one remains other to the other, and thereby indifferently the same.⁷¹

In an effort to shed further light on the perspective of Hutner outlined in this study, I will make mention of one significant discourse, which was delivered on the nineteenth of Kislev 5726 (December 13, 1965).⁷² Because of spatial constraints I can only make reference to this discourse, but it can be taken as representative of the position that Schneerson affirmed tenaciously through the decades. In the aforementioned talk, the redemptive task is cast in terms of a distinction between the revelation in the time of Solomon and the revelation in the future. In the case of the former, the illumination issued from the aspect of *Attiq*; in the case of the latter, the influx of light will come from the interiority (*penimiyyut*) of *Attiq*, which is the aspect of infinity in the head that is not known (*ein sof she-be-reisha de-lo ityeda*).⁷³ Paradoxically, the disclosure in the future will be the “disclosure of the essence that is beyond the aspect of disclosures” (*gilluy ha-ešem she-lema'lah mi-behinat*

69 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 260–261.

70 Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5655–5656* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2018), p. 319.

71 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, p. 264.

72 Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwva'adut 5726*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 2010), pp. 196–210. According to the first note in this edition, the discourse was edited by Schneerson. It was published as *Quntres Yuṭ Kislev—5752* in Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwva'adut 5752*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1993), pp. 372–374. I have consulted both versions but I will cite from the first one.

73 Schneerson combines two Lurianic tropes connected to the messianic future, the disclosure of the overflow of light from *penimiyyut de-attiq* and the elevation of *Malkhut* to the *reisha de-lo ityeda*. Concerning the former, see Ḥayyim Viṭal, *Eš Ḥayyim* (Jerusalem: Barzanai, 2013), 26:4, p. 32; idem, *Sha'ar ha-Kawwanot*, edited by Meir Yoḥanan Elkoubi (Jerusalem: Sha'arei Yiṣḥaq, 2019), p. 148; Moses Zacuto, *Perush ha-Remez le-Zohar ha-Qadosh: Sefer Shemot* (Moshav Biṭḥah: Makhon Qol Biṭḥah, 2002), p. 314. Concerning the latter, see Viṭal, *Eš Ḥayyim*, 13:2, 60d; idem, *Mavo She'arim*, edited by Meir Yoḥanan Elkoubi (Jerusalem: Sha'arei Yiṣḥaq, 2016), 3.3.1, p. 137.

ha-gilluyyim).⁷⁴ The disclosure above disclosure is the last of the seven ascents of *Malkhut*,⁷⁵ the ascent that occasions the revelation of the innermost aspect of the divine kingship, the *Malkhut de-Malkhut*,⁷⁶ which is marked as the *koah ha-po'el she-ba-nif'al*, the power of the agent in the recipient, the philosophical locution used to convey the mystery of the incarnation of the incorporeal in the guise of the corporeal, the dissemination of the essence of the light of the infinite (*ašmut or ein sof*) in the lower worlds of creation, formation, and doing. In that state, the material (*ha-gashmi*) will be in an extreme oneness with the divinity (*be-takhlit ha-hitahdut ba-elohut*) and the godliness will be omnipresent to the point that the concealment (*he'lem*) of the world (*ha-olam*) will be revealed as the very existence of the divine (*ha-meš'ut she-lo gufa*).⁷⁷

The novelty (*hiddush*) that will take place in the future by means of the overflow of light from the interiority of *Attiq* is that the natural powers (*koḥot ha-tiv'iyim*) will be converted into divine powers (*koḥot elohiyim*) and, as a consequence, the non-Jewish nations will themselves be transformed into holiness (*le-atid lavo yahafkhu hem ašmam li-qedushshah*).⁷⁸ This is the esoteric meaning of “For then I will make the nations pure of speech [*ki az ehpokh el amnim safah verurah*], so that they all invoke the Lord by name, and serve him with one accord” (Zephaniah 3:9):

By means of the diffusion of the disclosure of the interiority of *Attiq*, there will come about ‘I will transform the nations’ [*ehpokh el amnim*]; this is not a matter added to the disclosure but rather it is contained in the disclosure itself, for since the truth of the existence of the blessed One is the existence of all existents, therefore by means of the disclosure of the interiority of *Attiq*, it will be sensed in everything that its existence is divinity.⁷⁹

One cannot deny the radical implications of the position articulated by Schneerson. The messianic moment signifies a transvaluation whereby the rigid boundary separating Jew and non-Jew will be dissolved.⁸⁰ As a consequence of

74 Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwva'adut 5726*, vol. 1, p. 205.

75 Viṭal, *Eš Hayyim*, 36:1–2, pp. 108–113.

76 Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwva'adut 5726*, vol. 1, pp. 205–206.

77 *Ibid.*, pp. 206–207.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 207.

79 *Ibid.*, pp. 207–208.

80 The radicalness of Schneerson's position can be gauged if we compare it to the view articulated by Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Torah*, vol. 1, Shelaḥ. 43a: “In the future, however, ‘Strangers shall stand and pasture your flocks etc.’ (Isaiah 61:5), and they will be

the effluence issuing from the interiority of *Attiq*, the light of the infinite will proliferate ubiquitously such that nature itself will be transmuted into divinity, or to be more precise, the veil will be unveiled and the divine essence of creation will be revealed and everything material will be exposed to be vessels of the godly light delimiting the limitless light of infinity.⁸¹ With this concealment of the concealment, the non-Jew is transformed, and hence the being that possessed only an animal soul is integrated into the divine soul of the Jew, an inverse of the current situation in which the corporeal body of the Jew appears in its corporeality like the bodies of the non-Jewish nations.⁸² This is surely a bold position that ostensibly challenges the hierarchy, but one cannot ignore the fact that the transubstantiation is predicated on the nullification of the rank of the non-Jew just as the ontic nature of the material will be annihilated in the luminosity of the divine; in the oneness of that which has no opposition, what was imagined to be oppositional is abolished.⁸³ Reading between

inferior to Israel, for they will fulfill the commandments for which a woman is obligated, as it is written 'For then I will make the nations pure of speech etc.' (Zephaniah 3:9). They, too, will be able to ascend but they will be inferior to Israel by means of the ploughing and sowing. But Israel themselves, on account of their being in the aspect of 'with all your might', that is, the desire and will of God [*teshuqah we-raṣon ha-maqom*] to the aspect of encompassing all worlds, they could not lower themselves to rectify the aspect of place [*letaqqen beḥinat maqom*] but rather they eat from that which was prepared." On the halakhic status of the non-Jew in the messianic future, see Wojciech Tworek, *Eternity Now: Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady and Temporality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019), pp. 74–79. The passage I cited is mentioned on p. 76. For the leveling of the halakhic difference between Jewish men and women in the future, see Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5572* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2006) p. 151, analyzed in Elliot R. Wolfson, "Nequddat ha-Reshimu—The Trace of Transcendence and the Transcendence of the Trace: The Paradox of *Šimšum* in the RaShab's *Hemshekh Ayin Beit*," *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 30 (2013): 97–98 n. 91.

81 Yosef Yiṣḥaq Schneerson, *Sefer Ma'amarim 5685* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1987), p. 88. Compare Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'adut 5751*, vol. 3, p. 379.

82 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 1, ch. 49, 70a.

83 See Dovber Schneerson, *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1995), pt. 1, 54d: "The divine soul has no adversary at all because the adversary is abrogated in the essence of his substance without any war (for the aspect of *yehidah* radiates the actual divine light, which is called the image of God) ... and then, as a result, the total aspect of the source of the foreign will of the animal soul is abrogated ... and this is the aspect of peace that is above war in the manner of the future when there will be the aspect of the nullification of the essence [*biṭṭul be-ešem*] of all the creatures, and also the aspect of the evil of *nogah* on account of the greater disclosure of divinity.... And so with regard to the nations of the world it is written 'And all the nations shall gaze upon it' (Isaiah 2:2) in the aspect of the nullification of themselves [*biṭṭul ašmam*], which was not by war at all, as it is written 'And they shall enter the caverns in the rock [and hollows in the ground] because of the fear of the Lord' (*ibid.*, 19)." Compare Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'adut*

the lines, Schneerson's words corroborate the view of Hutner that Jews give witness to the fact that the general must always be measured from the standpoint of a singularity that abstains from collapsing the difference between self and other in the othering of the self that is comprised in the self of the other.

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5751, vol. 3, p. 380; idem, *Liqqutei Siḥot*, vol. 31 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2000), pp. 83–84. On the obliteration of the antagonistic force, see the additional passages cited in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 184, 185–186, 349 n. 297.

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